

Application of Collegiality in Schools: A Case of Gaborone Private Secondary Schools, Botswana.

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Abstract

The use of collegial models in secondary schools is growing in importance with believes that it is more democratic and liberating to teachers. This study investigated the assumption that collegiality is applied in private secondary schools in Gaborone. Multi-stage cluster sampling strategy under the umbrella of cross-sectional research design was used to select the 8 accessible schools out of a cluster of 15 Gaborone private secondary schools. A twenty itemed questionnaire was given to 75 sampled teachers to react to three different aspects of collegiality. A Cronbach's alpha index was used to ascertain reliability and it was found to be .84 for all items used. With the analysis of data using paired sample t-test with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the findings of the study revealed that there was no use of consensus in management; no dialogue and involvement of staff in recruiting and firing of staff; and no involvement of teachers in the making of decisions through staff meetings in the day-to-day running of private secondary schools in Gaborone. Out of the findings, recommendations were made to private secondary schools stake holders, private secondary school managers and the ministry of education.

Key Words: Collegiality, Consensus, Private secondary schools, School management

Introduction

The styles and methods used in day-to-day running of secondary schools have an immense impact on how an institution performs not only in academics but also in discipline and its marketing. Collegiality is one of the methods used in the management of secondary schools and it is one of the humanistic models of organizations that advocates for human values, job breath, consultation, consensus, and decentralization (Everard, Morris and Wilson, 2004). It is argued that "the assumption is that schools and colleges determine policies and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus" (Bush, 2002, p.20).

Collegiality is the manner in which school managers interact with one another and teachers and the extent to which they approach and make decisions that affect their schools as professionals. It is all about moving away from an old dogmatic ideology that an individual or a few individuals are the masters of knowledge with emphasis on all decision-making done by one individual or a few individuals, towards a more shared, open and participative approach to decision making. Sutton (1997) sees collegiality as an emphasis on staff consultation and participation in decision making and above all the value given to human interactions in an organization for enhancement of students' performance. It is assumed that collegiality is applied in private secondary schools in Gaborone. This study was to investigate this assumption and reveal to what extent collegiality is applied by the private secondary school managers in Gaborone within Botswana.

Background to the Study

Collegiality is not a concept of today but of yesterday. Elements of collegiality can be traced as early as the time of Max Weber (1864 – 1920), a German social scientist and one of the founders of modern sociology who described the conflicts between professionalism, which is considered

pro-ethical, and bureaucracy, which he considered pro-materialist (Petro, 1992). According to Petro, Weber viewed collegial structure as the chief mechanism for advancing specialization. Weber further noted that collegial structure provided a forum for communication among individuals with highly specialized roles, and through shared ethical standards regulated against both naked self-interest and the arbitrary exercise of power. On the other hand, Dyk (1999) has indicated that management problems which warranted the use of different management models began "just before the industrial revolution when cottage industries became so large that owners were obliged to employ "strange" people in addition to family members" (p. 20). During this period, collegiality emerged as one of the management methods and it has been developing to date in different countries and organizations.

In recent times, Freidson (1994) and Waters (1989) have shown that collegiality can now be understood as a full-fledged organizational form that is worth using for better performance of institutions. Brundrett and Burton (1997) for instance have highlighted that "there is evidence that in Britain, a collegial style of school leadership

has become the official model of good practice” (p.156). This is especially useful in the coordination of the knowledge in which interdependent members jointly help each other as they strive to achieve institutional objectives. Collegiality became popular as the most appropriate method to run secondary schools in the 1980s and 1990s and that it was associated with school effectiveness and improvement (Bush, 2003). Collegial management enhances school development.

Research Hypotheses

The following speculations were used in this study.

- There is no relationship between the use of consensus and the management of private secondary schools in Gaborone.
- There is no relationship between the level of dialogue and involvement of staff members when recruiting and firing of staff in private secondary schools in Gaborone.
- There is no relationship between involvement of teachers and the making of decisions through staff meetings in private secondary schools in Gaborone.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out whether collegiality model of management is applied in private secondary schools in Gaborone. This was done by investigating to what extent three collegiality aspects were applied in the day-to-day running of private secondary schools in Gaborone city.

Statement of the Problem

Collegiality in secondary schools has been slower, less complete and more piecemeal than in higher education. According to Bush (2003), this is because of the powerful head teachers, with authority over staff in practice. Collegiality works when teachers discuss teaching materials, provide demonstration lessons, and observe and comment on each other's lessons and the work that they do in school. In the study of collegiality, Bush (2003) and Mullins (2002) have argued that the decision making process is thought to be egalitarian with influence dependent more on specific expertise than an official position but this applies less in most secondary schools. Bush (2003) further holds that, “the desire to maintain staff participation in decision-making is increasingly in conflict with external demands for accountability notably in respect of funding, quality control and research assessment” (p.69). This does not only affect teachers involved but it also impacts negatively on the overall school performance. This tension between participation and accountability is also evident in schools with indications that at a time when accountability to external organizations is becoming increasingly important, collegial models may lead to conflicts between participation and accountability (Brundrett and Burton, 1997). This becomes the case because it is the heads and the principals who remain accountable to the governing bodies that appoint them.

On the other hand, Ringer (2004) on the misuse of collegiality has argued that classical authors such as Max Weber considered collegiality as an organizational device used by autocrats to prevent experts and professionals from challenging monocratic and sometimes arbitrary powers simply by selecting on the people they work with, some of whom are professional mediocre. It is argued that some managers view pure collegiality as a way that can put them out of control of their organizations and make them “impotent” because they fear that their powers of controlling and spearheading will be taken by some specialists but who happen to be part of the organization. Complaints, mass exodus, non-renewal of contracts, and frequent recruitments of staff are common characteristics among private secondary schools in Gaborone. These unstable and poor staff retention conditions are associated with draconian and mediocre school management tactics that have general negative impacts to private secondary schools in Gaborone.

Significance of the Study

The day-to-day management of schools requires staff members to have direct access to the internal school fabrics that are associated with the performance of the school in all spheres. Collegiality is one of the humanistic management styles that have been proven successful in many institutions. This study will benefit members of the education fraternity ranging from the school managers who are directly involved in the running of schools on daily basis to the ministry of education. To the managers, this study will inform them about what liberty and involvement of teachers is worth in schools. The study will also benefit the ministry of education in the sense that it will be an eye opener and involve the ministry officials more in the private schools for the benefit of society since the private schools take a good number of students and teachers as learners and educators respectively in Gaborone.

Literature Review

Collegial models include all those theories which emphasize that power and decision making should be shared among some or all members of the organization. Hull (2006) on different approaches used in decision making in higher education notes that collegial structures are those in which there is dominant orientation to a consensus achieved between the members of a body of experts who are theoretically equal in their levels of expertise but who are specialized by area of expertise. Bush (2003) holds that “these approaches range from “restricted” collegiality where the leader shares power with a limited number of senior colleagues to a “pure” collegiality where all members have an equal voice in determining policy” (p.64). Collegial models assume that organizations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus and that power is shared among some or all members of the organization who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of the institution (Bush, 2003).

Restricted collegiality has some shortcomings in that the chosen few may lack some expertise, experience and above all they may be chosen through bias and myopic instincts from the managers. Pure collegiality which according to Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004) is staff involving and “participative” in nature in decision making, is said to have advantages in that it entails a wide variety in expertise and professional knowledge that help to make sound decisions for the institution. It is also argued that with collegiality, the implementation of decisions made are effective and more likely to work due to the involvement of teachers who happen to have been involved in the formulation of policies (Bush, 2003; Everard et al., 2004).

Bush and Bell (2002) hold that there are three main arguments in favour of collegial approach to management:

- There is ample evidence that teachers wish to be involved in decision making.
- The quality of decision making may be better when educators participate in the process. Staff involvement increases the quantum of expertise brought to bear on problems although the time spent in meetings may elongate the decision process and frustrate participants.
- Effective implementation of decision is more likely if teachers ‘own’ the outcomes through their participation.

Collegiality is associated with school effectiveness and improvement if properly used in a school environment. It is argued that collegiality has the following features:

- It assumes an authority of expertise in contrast to the positional authority associated with bureaucracy. Teachers have specific expertise as subject specialists as well as general competence as education professionals.
- Teachers have a common set of values emanating from the socialization which occurs during training and professional practice.
- Decisions are reached through a process of decision leading to consensus. The belief that there are common values and shared aims leads to a view that it is both desirable and feasible to resolve issues by agreement.

Brown, Boyle and Boyle (1999) and Bush (2003) note that, the features of collegiality appear to a greater or less extent in each of the main sectors of education and that they are applicable in secondary schools. In decision making, the head teachers’ constructive decision making process is participatory in order to gain greater acceptance of decision and greater teacher satisfaction. Mullins (2002) notes that “an understanding on how decisions are made help in understanding behaviour in the organization” (p.71).

It is argued that with collegiality many parties are involved in decision making which include teachers, management teams, i.e PTA and BOG and to some extent students. Many participants have noted that although collegiality is an attractive notion because of its involvement of teachers, it has several limitations, notably in the time taken to make decisions and the assumption that outcomes will be determined by consensus rather than conflicts. This sentiment is shared by Brown, Boyle and Boyle (1999) who argue that while collegiality may offer many persuasive benefits, it is, in reality, difficult to attain to its fullest.

Methodology

Gaborone has the highest concentration of private secondary schools in Botswana (30 % of the 50 private schools in Botswana are in Gaborone). A Multi-stage cluster sampling strategy was used to select the accessible population in this study. The target population of the study consisted of all the 50 private secondary schools in Botswana. Multi-stage cluster sampling strategy was used to select the 8 accessible schools out of a cluster of 15 Gaborone private secondary schools. A 20 itemed questionnaire was designed to collect information regarding

the aspects of management which included staff meetings, decision making, policy formulation, recruitment and firing of teachers and use of consensus. Cross-sectional design and quantitative strategy were used in this study which involved the giving out of questionnaires to 80 teachers, 10 from each of the 8 schools within a period of two days and collected after one week. Out of the 80 questionnaires that were given out, 75 were collected. Using SPSS, the data from teachers were scored and coded and then analyzed using paired sample t-test analysis strategy. Means and standard deviations for the three mentioned major areas under investigation were identified for use in the paired sample t-test analysis while an alpha level of .05, t-values, t-critical, df and p-values were used for presentation and interpretation of results. Tables were used to record results of the analysis.

Instrumentation and Reliability

The researcher designed and developed a twenty itemed questionnaire with items grouped into three based on the three major areas i.e consensus; staff appointments, firing and their involvement; and policy, staff meetings and decision making. Reliability of items that were used was tested using Cronbach's alpha index. An alpha index of .84 was realized for all the 20 items. An alpha index of .77 was realized for the items which were testing whether consensus was applied in the day-to-day management of schools. On appointments, firing of staff and staff involvement, the items which were testing this phenomenon registered an alpha index of .60 while those that were testing policy, staff meetings and decision making registered an alpha index of .65.

Data Analysis and Research Findings

The first hypothesis which stated that "there is no relationship between the use of consensus and the management of private secondary schools in Gaborone" was tested using a paired sample t-test by comparing the means of the items (see Table 1) that were collecting data on the use of consensus and the item "all teachers are involved in management in this school". The analysis gave a t-value of 2.628 at a df of 74 and a p-value of .010 at an alpha of .05 (see Table 2). A df of 74 at an α level of .05 = 1.99. This shows that a t-value of 2.628 is greater than a t-critical of 1.99, a value required for α = .05. Based on the teachers' responses, there is a relationship between the use of consensus and the management of private secondary schools in Gaborone, $t(74) = 2.628$, $p < .05$ on consensus. This result led to the rejection of null hypothesis 1.

The second hypothesis, "there is no relationship between the level of dialogue and involvement of staff members when recruiting and firing of staff in private secondary schools in Gaborone" was as well tested using paired sample t-test by comparing the means of the items (see Table 1) that collected information on: the appointment of departmental heads, qualification and staff appointments, consultation and staff appointment and their firing, with the item "the school head consults and uses a few teachers in this school". The analysis produced a t-value of 2.213 at a df of 74 and a p-value of .030 at an alpha level of .05. (see Table 3). A df of 74 at an alpha of .05 = 1.99. Out of this result it was revealed that a t-value of 2.285 is greater than a t-critical of 1.99 a value required for α = .05.

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of study variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Use of consensus in schools.	1.87	.664
All teachers are involved in school management.	1.55	.793
Staff involv in recruitment & firing of teachers	2.27	.704
School head consults.	1.97	1.013
Teachers are involved in the making of policies and decisions through staff meetings.	2.48	.865
Policies and decisions are made by the principal and the management team.	1.55	.793

df = 74; Critical $t = 1.99$; $\alpha = 0.05$.

Based on the information given by teachers on hypothesis 2, the analysis revealed that there is a relationship between the use of dialogue and involvement of staff when recruiting and firing of staff in private secondary schools in Gaborone, $t(74) = 2.213$, $p < .05$. This result led to the rejection of null hypothesis 2.

Table 2

Paired sample t-test between the use of consensus and the management of private secondary schools in Gaborone

Pair 1	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Use of consensus in school- All teachers are involved in school management	.3201	.055	2.628	74	.010

$p < .05$; $df=74$; Critical $t = 1.99$; $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 3

Paired sample t-test analysis on staff involvement in recruitment and firing of teachers and school head consults.

Pair 1	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Staff involvement in the recruitment and firing of teachers- School head consults	.293	1.148	2.213	74	.030

$p < .05$; $df=74$; Critical $t = 1.99$; $\alpha = 0.05$.

Lastly, the third hypothesis on whether “there is no relationship between teachers involvement in making policies and decisions through staff meetings in Gaborone private secondary schools” was analyzed by comparing items’ means (see Table 1) that collected information on policy formulation, involvement of teachers in policy formulation and decision making and the nature of staff meetings with that which collected information on policies and decisions are made by the principal and the management team. Results of the analysis gave a t-value of 7.941, a p-value of .000 at a df of 74 at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 4). A df of 74 at α of .05 = 1.99. From the results of the analysis it was revealed that a t-value of 7.941 is much greater than a t-critical of 1.99, a value required for $\alpha = .05$. Based on this result on data collected from teachers, hypothesis 3 was rejected, $t(74) = 7.941$, $p < .05$ on teacher involvement.

Table 4

Paired sample t-test analysis on teachers involvement in making of policies and decisions through staff meetings in Gaborone private secondary schools

Pair 1	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Teachers are involved in the making of policies and decisions through staff meetings- Policies and decisions are made by the principal and the management team	.933	1.017	7.941	74	.000

$p < .05$; $df=74$; Critical $t = 1.99$; $\alpha = 0.05$.

Discussions

Management is about setting direction and organizing available resources (people, time, materials) so that the school set objectives can be achieved in a planned manner; and setting and improving organizational standards. Above all, the manager must additionally “direct” the work of others for the maximum achievement of schools’ set goals and objectives. Arriving at decisions through consensus in secondary schools is an important phenomenon that is said to bear positive results for the well-being of schools. The use of collegial models in private secondary schools is one of the management models that aims at involving teachers in the way schools are run for the realization of school’s set aims and objectives. Collegiality and its application in Gaborone were found to be lacking. Information gathered from teachers who answered the questions on the use of consensus revealed that there was no consensus used in private schools between the managers and staff members. Dialogue and consensus are not only liberating but can help those in the system to understand that their contributions towards the institution are worth and acceptable, a phenomenon that can motivate them for higher production. Dogmatic and notions that a few individuals are the masters of knowledge should be understood that they are not only undemocratic and outdated but can also deny the institution a variety of diverse knowledge from staff expertise that can help the institution’s prosperity and better performance. Thus involvement of staff is the promotion of democratic ideas which the international community is now advocating for in many countries and institutions.

The choice on how a decision will be arrived at should take into account the issue and the people involved in an effort to minimize the cost and maximize the quality of the decision made. “But many business people automatically make decisions in whatever way they feel most comfortable,

or simply perpetuate the ways in which decisions have been made before, without looking at the fit between the decision and the decision-making style” (Wilson, 2005, p.1). Once a participant in an arrived decision is involved, the actions and performance at implementation phase are easy and higher respectively. This is the case for why teachers need prior knowledge to the policies and objectives that they are asked to implement later. As Sun YatSen of China once put it in one of his speeches, “To understand is hard. Once one understands, action is easy” (Cohen et al., 2000). It is therefore essential for teachers to be involved and made to understand what they are to implementing and/or what to achieve for the organization. Use of consensus which was found lacking in Gaborone private secondary schools is part of team work which O’Neill (1997) sees as what offers feasible, challenging and supportive means of enhancing management practices.

Involvement of the staff in the recruitment process is essential because those departments involved can give advice on the recruits (new staff members) that will be suitable for the job. In Gaborone private secondary schools, it was revealed that teachers are not involved. The information collected from teachers and its subsequent analysis revealed that there is a relationship between the use of dialogue and involvement of staff when recruiting and firing of staff in private secondary schools in Gaborone. This means that the opposite i.e involving staff could change the state of affairs not only in teaching and performance but also in school reputation. As Middlewood (1997) argues, people are the most important resource in educational organizations and therefore appointing the right staff is paramount. Wrong recruitment can lead to labour turn over, increased costs for the organization and lowering the morale for the existing workforce (Mullins, 2007).

Staff meetings form an important vehicle in the deliberation of school policies and objectives and not to cause confusion and frustration (Everard et al., 2004). While meetings are meant to make decisions, collect views, exchange information and generate ideas, the responses from teachers gave the opposite, with notions that such meetings were one way (monologue) with the “chair” as the dominant figure. Results produced by the testing of hypothesis 3 revealed that there is a relationship in involving teachers in the making of policies and decisions through staff meetings in Gaborone private secondary schools. If staff meetings do not meet their obligations then there emerges a “milliard” of problems some of which will affect implementation of policies that affect the institution. Finally, as available literature indicate, it is essential for school heads and managers to be informed and updated with the current trends and techniques especially in regard to management and role of staff meetings for institutions.

Summary and Conclusion

This study found out that collegial model of school management is not applied in private secondary schools in Gaborone in Botswana. The information gathered from teachers from the 8 schools that formed the accessible population as a representative of the target population gave the following results: First, on whether there was the use of consensus in private secondary schools in Gaborone through discussion of issues, airing of views by

teachers, whether few members of staff were used, whether consultation was done and whether it was management through monologue or dialogue, the results indicated that consensus never prevailed in these schools. Secondly, the analysis of information from teachers revealed that merit was not considered when appointing departmental heads and that qualification was not a major issue in the appointment of teachers while hiring and firing of staff was done without staff consultation. Lastly, the analysis of data from teachers revealed that teachers were not involved in making policies and decisions through staff meetings in Gaborone private secondary schools.

Recommendations and Further Research

- School heads and managers should be involved in the attendance of international and regional seminars and workshops on management which are organized by, education stake holders, non-governmental organizations and global bodies concerned with education e.g United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Such seminars and workshops will equip and/or refresh the managers on issues related to management of schools. They will also help in the acquisition of the latest developments in the management issues that are currently in use for the enhancement of good governance for better staff and school performance.
- The ministry of education should organize compulsory school management seminars to be given to both government and private school managers for the purposes of enhancing uniformity in school management issues since all schools are under the control of the ministry of education in Botswana. In this regard, principals and/or school managers should understand the importance of the use of dialogue and consensus in decision making and solution to problems in their institutions.
- This research has established that there is no use of collegiality in private secondary schools in Gaborone. There is need for more research to be done on this subject specifically with the objective of getting impacts that the non-application of collegiality models has to the staff in relation to their production and school academic performance.

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